

TO: Montana Legislature House Judiciary Committee

FROM: Missoula Anti Human Trafficking Task Force

SUBJECT: Letter of Support of HB 89

February 2, 2015

The Missoula Anti Human Trafficking Task Force was formed in March 2013 and is a collaborative effort to combat human trafficking, especially the sexual exploitation of young girls and women in our community and across the state of Montana. The groups' members are representatives from the following agencies: YWCA Missoula, Missoula County Crime Victim Advocate Office, Missoula Police Department Special Victims Unit, Missoula County Sheriff's Office, Missoula County Attorney's Office, Montana Violent Crime Task Force, Ravalli County Supporters of Abuse Free Environments, and the Red Willow Center for Health and Healing. The Task Force's is committed to providing victim-centered & trauma-informed services to adult and child survivors of sex and labor trafficking with a focus on prosecuting traffickers and sex buyers and not re-victimizing survivors by criminalizing them. Consequently, the task force is in strong support of HB 89. We believe that the bill will provide consistency with other states that have successfully prosecuted traffickers and that adding elements such as asset forfeiture, will make our state's approach to this crime more comprehensive. Lastly, we strongly believe in the creation of a Human Trafficking Education Fund. Trafficking is a crime that is often hidden among other crimes and can be easily missed or misidentified. Thus, we have to improve public system's identification of victims to ensure that they are safe and receive appropriate services and at the same time to ensure traffickers are being arrested, charged, and successfully prosecuted.

The Missoula Anti Human Trafficking Task Force strongly urges this session's House Judiciary Committee to vote in favor of HB 89 and send a strong statement against violence and exploitation in our beautiful state.

Thank you for your time and do not hesitate to contact any of us with additional questions you might have.

Sincerely,



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